

**REMARKS**

Claims 1, 2, 6-12 and 14-23 are pending in this application. Applicant appreciates the Office Action's indication that claims 19-23 are allowed.

By this Amendment, claim 1 is amended to incorporate the subject matter recited in claims 3-5. Claim 11 is amended to incorporate the subject matter recited in claim 13 and to recite features recited in claims 4 and 5. Claims 3-5 and 13 are canceled.

The specification is amended to correct a typographical error as the Examiner suggested.

Reconsideration of the application is respectfully requested.

The Examiner is respectfully requested to acknowledge consideration of the references listed on, and to return an initialed copy of, the form PTO-1449 submitted with the June 13, 2006 Information Disclosure Statement.

The Office Action objects to the specification. The specification is amended, as outlined above. Accordingly, withdrawal of the objection to the specification is respectfully requested.

The Office Action rejects claims 1, 2, 6, 11, 12 and 14 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over EP 0525988A to Nakamura et al. ("Nakamura"); rejects claims 3-5 and 13 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Nakamura in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,672,705 to Kitahara et al. ("Kitahara"); and rejects claims 7-11 and 15-18 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Nakamura in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,572,242 to Fujii et al. ("Fujii"). These rejections are respectfully traversed.

Claim 1 is amended to incorporate the subject matter of claims 3-5, as outlined above. Claim 11 is similarly amended. Nakamura, Kitahara and Fujii, either individually or in combination, do not disclose or suggest the subject matter recited in claims 1 and 11 as amended, because these references do not disclose or suggest the cleaning of a recess, as recognized in the Office Action in connection with the patentability of claim 19.

Regarding claims 3-5 and 13, the Office Action admits that Nakamura does not disclose or suggest the features recited in these claims, but asserts that Kitahara supplies the subject matter lacking in Nakamura. However, Kitahara only discloses a cleaning claw 27 that removes ink on the surface of the transportation belt 18. See Figs. 2 and 3, and col. 6, lines 55-59. Kitahara does not disclose or suggest removing ink in the opening 18C. Thus, Kitahara does not disclose or suggest cleaning a recess. Also, Fujii does not disclose or suggest cleaning a recess.

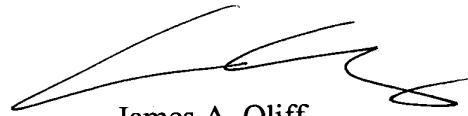
In view of the above, as recognized in the Office Action, Nakamura, Kitahara and Fujii do not disclose or suggest cleaning a recess. Therefore, they do not disclose or suggest cleaning ink ejected by a second recovery ejection unit, the second recovery ejection unit performing recovery ejection at a predetermined position on the transport belt, and the transport belt having a recess that receives ink ejected to the belt at the predetermined position, as recited in claim 1, and similarly recited in claim 11.

For at least the above reasons, Nakamura , Kitahara and Fujii, either individually or in combination, do not disclose or suggest the subject matte recited in claims 1 and 11 and claims 2, 6-10, 12 and 14-18 depending therefrom. Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1, 2, 6-12 and 14-18 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) and §103(a) is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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Attachment:

Petition for Extension of Time

Date: October 31, 2006

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